

Message Text

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PAGE 01 ADDIS 06057 221523Z

17

ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-07 INR-07

LAB-04 NSAE-00 SIL-01 L-02 DODE-00 PA-01 USIA-06

PRS-01 SP-02 AID-05 /055 W

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R 221430Z MAY 75

FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4564

INFO AMCONSUL ASMARA

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

C O N F I D E N T I A L ADDIS ABABA 6057

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ELAB PFOR ET US

SUBJECT: DIRG CONFRONTATION WITH EAL EMPLOYEES OVER CELU

HEADQUARTERS CLOSURE

NAIROBI FOR CALDWELL

REF: ADDIS ABABA 6056

1. RELIABLE AMERICAN SOURCE HAS PASSED US FOLLOWING ON CONFRONTATION WHICH DEVELOPED MAY 20 BETWEEN DIRG DELEGATION HEADED BY "CHAIRMAN ITS ECONOMIC COMMITTEE" (PRESUMABLY CAPT. MOGES WOLDE MICHAEL) AND EAL EMPLOYEES. MEETING CONVENED AT DIRG'S REQUEST BY NEW EAL GENERAL MANAGER AND WAS WELL-ATTENDED. OVERFLOW CROWD OF EAL EMPLOYEES ABLE LISTEN TO PROCEEDINGS OVER LOUDSPEAKER SYSTEM.

2. NEW GENERAL MANAGER OPENED MEETING BY INTRODUCING DIRG DELEGATION. HE SAID DELEGATION WOULD EXPLAIN REASONS FOR CELU HEADQUARTERS CLOSURE, THAT HE WISHED THEN RAISE A FEW SUBJECTS OF HIS OWN AND THAT HE HOPED MATTER COULD BE HANDLED SPEEDILY SO THAT EVERYONE COULD GET BACK TO WORK PROMPTLY. HE WAS BOOED. SEVERAL EMPLOYEES ROSE TO SAY THAT EMPLOYEES HAD QUESTIONS OF
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PAGE 02 ADDIS 06057 221523Z

THEIR OWN AND HOPED OCCASION WOULD BE PROVIDED POSE THEM AND SEEK ANSWERS FROM DIRG. DIRG CAPTAIN THEN TOOK FLOOR AND WENT

THROUGH EXPLANATION ON REASONS FOR CELU HEADQUARTERS CLOSURE SET FORTH PARA 6 ADDIS 5928. CAPTAIN PLACED EMPHASIS ON "CAPITALIST ORIGINS" OF AND SUPPORT FOR CELU. HE NOTED THAT SUCH A CELU HAD NO PLACE IN SOCIALIST ETHIOPIA. THIS ELICITED IMMEDIATE REJOINDER FROM SEVERAL EAL EMPLOYEES WHO NOTED THAT CELU HAD BEEN IMPORTANT TO THEM; ASKED BY WHAT AUTHORITY DIRG HAD CLOSED IT; AND DEMANDED TO KNOW WHAT DIRG PROPOSED PUT IN ITS PLACE. "WE HAVE SUPPORTED CELU WITH OUR VOTES AND OUR MONEY* WHAT ARE YOU DOING FOR US?" OTHER EMPLOYEES THEN REPORTEDLY SPOKE UP TO SAY THAT DIRG HAD DISSOLVED STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS WHICH HAD SUPPORTED ITS RISE TO POWER AND TO NOTE THAT DIRG NOW SEEMED BENT ON DOING SAME TO UNIONS. DIRG SPOKESMAN REJOINED THAT "CIA" HAD FINANCED CELU AND IT OBVIOUS THIS COULD NOT CONTINUE. SEVERAL EMPLOYEES THEREUPON IMMEDIATELY RESPONDED THAT DIRG WAS FINE ONE TO TALK ABOUT AMERICAN SUPPORT. IT WAS BEING SUPPORTED BY AMERICAN FUNDS AND AMERICAN SUPPORT FOR ETHIOPIA WAS SURELY NOTHING NEW. DIRG MEMBERS THEREUPON WITHDREW. NEW EAL GENERAL MANAGER TRIED CONCLUDE SESSION ON PATRIOTIC NOTE EMPHASIZING NEED FOR DISCIPLINE. EMPLOYEES TOLD HIM THAT EAL WAS DISCIPLINED ORGANIZATION, BUT THAT DID NOT MEAN EMPLOYEES UNPREPARED SPEAK THEIR MIND TO HIM OR TO DIRG.

3. COMMENT: WORD OF TENOR THIS MEETING ALREADY ALL OVER TOWN, WHICH NOT SURPRISING GIVEN SIZE OF AUDIENCE WHICH PARTICIPATED. HUMMEL

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: LABOR, LABOR RELATIONS, INTERVENTION, LABOR UNIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 22 MAY 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: johnsorg
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975ADDIS06057
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750181-0165
From: ADDIS ABABA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750525/aaaaavyc.tel
Line Count: 86
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 75 ADDIS ABABA 6056
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: johnsorg
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 21 APR 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <21 APR 2003 by BoyleJA>; APPROVED <11 DEC 2003 by johnsorg>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: DIRG CONFRONTATION WITH EAL EMPLOYEES OVER CELU HEADQUARTERS CLOSURE
TAGS: ELAB, PFOR, ET, US, CELU
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006